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**One Year Of Wobbly
Organizing In Indiana** 3

**IWW Organizer
Training In Uganda A
Success!** 5

**FW Frank Little
Commemorated in
Montana** 7

**Solidarity With
Garment Workers In
Bangladesh** 12

Striking Workers At Insomnia Cookies Join The IWW

By Jake Carman

At midnight on Sunday, Aug. 18, the night shift at the Harvard Square Insomnia Cookies in Boston voted unanimously to launch a strike for higher wages, health-care and freedom to build a union. On Tuesday, Aug. 20, all four strikers joined the IWW and initiated a public campaign to achieve their goals.

Insomnia Cookies, with 30 locations in the United States, caters to college students and runs late night deliveries of warm cookies and milk to dorm rooms. Still delivering cookies until 2:45 a.m., Insomnia workers who double-duty as bakers and cashiers receive only \$9 per hour. “Drivers,” who are expected to deliver cookies by bicycle within a half hour, receive only \$5 per hour plus tips. Neither bakers/cashiers nor drivers receive healthcare, and at a job where turnover is so high, the typical employee lasts only a month. As Niko Stapczynski, a striking driver at Insomnia told the *Industrial Worker*, “I was being paid below minimum wage. We had no breaks because we were understaffed. Sometimes we’d work without breaks until 3:15 a.m. We

were supposed to keep delivery time as fast as possible, which encouraged unsafe riding.”

Peak hours are late at night when college students are returning from parties. As the lines of customers thickened on the evening of Saturday, Aug. 17, Chris Helali noticed his co-workers were stressed. “I gauged the overall feeling that night and people were pretty down. I basically said, ‘guys let’s go on strike.’ It took about an hour to get everyone to agree and to figure out what we were going to do.” The entire night shift of four workers: Chris Helali, Jonathan Peña, Niko Stapczynski, and Luke Robinson, used the store computer to type up a strike agreement, and made signs for the store’s windows. Then, Helali continued, “We told the customers we were going on strike. Some of the customers asked, ‘Can we at least get a cookie before you close down the store?’ So we said, ‘Sure, why not.’ We served everyone in the store. Then we went outside to put up the signs and lock the door.”



Continued on 6 Insomnia workers walk the picket line on Aug. 29

Photo: FW Le Le LeChat

Reports, Discussion Abound At The 2013 IWW General Convention



IWW members from across North America and Europe gather in Edmonton for the 2013 General Convention.

Photo: DJ Alperovitz

gave the attendees a chance to get to know each other before getting to work on union business the following days. The billets were sent in advance and, as was the case for me, if your flight got canceled, the local organizers were able to roll with the punches and accommodate you without problems. The lodging was coordinated efficiently and provided by local members that were genuinely hospitable.

Saturday morning started with the credentials verification to ensure that all of the delegates were eligible to perform their duty. All delegates were given a free copy of the new book published by Recomposition Blog, “Lines of Work: Stories of Jobs and Resistance,” as part of its official launch. The whole day was dedicated to reports from the union’s

officers and standing committees. Our General Secretary-Treasurer (GST), FW Sam Green, ended his mandate by providing us with enlightening comments on the challenges that the union is facing according to him. Of these, I would mention the difficulty that our current structures have in dealing with our international growth. Indeed, and it is a good problem to have: from a membership largely based in North America, our union has grown quite a bit Europe at the turn of the century. This poses a few challenges, for instance, that General Headquarters (GHQ) acts as the de facto General Administration for the whole union but also as the specific administration for members in the United States. The report of the Organizational Training Committee (OTC) was very impressive. This committee is in the process of formalizing the curriculum of the Organizer Training. The trainers will also be trained,

Continued on 6

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By Mathieu Dube

This year my fellow workers of the Pittsburgh General Membership Branch (GMB) entrusted me to be their delegate to the 2013 IWW General Convention that was held in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada on Labor Day weekend, Friday, Aug. 30 - Sunday, Sept. 1. I will share my experience of the proceedings in the following lines. I chose to focus on what displayed, in my opinion, the most interest for the union membership. I apologize for the voluntary omissions.

The first thing that stood out was how well the Edmonton branch took care of the logistics. The transportation was slick to the Friday “meet-and-greet” that took place in the same building that the convention would be held the following days, the Queen Mary Park Community League Hall located in a park. There were literature and swag tables offering an extensive selection of political books. Beer and alcohol were sold as part of a benefit. This event

Wobbly Perspective

One Year Of Organizing In Indiana

By Michael White

In early October 2012, Hope Asya and I toured several cities and towns in Indiana, having call-out meetings along the way for interested people to hear about and discuss the IWW. There were several well-attended meetings throughout a week-long road trip, after which a surge of people joined the IWW throughout the state. The following month we held our first all-state meeting to discuss moving to form a General Membership Branch (GMB). We continued to meet monthly, and by late February 2013, our petition to be chartered was approved and our GMB has met every month since. An article was published on page 1 of the December 2012 *IW*, titled “Wobbly Tour of Indiana,” detailing the event. The Wobbly Tour, as it has come to be known by, has kick-started our organizing efforts here in Indiana and led us to form the GMB and continue our activities. As I write now, it is late August 2013, and throughout this year of organizing in Indiana, our branch has experienced quite a lot of activity. We have been active in on-the-job direct action and organizing, participated in strikes and campaigns, grown to a sizable and cohesive branch, and overcome several major hurdles as we have connected radicals and labor activists throughout the state.

Several members within our GMB are actively trying to salt on the job, agitating and educating at their workplace, and making some promising gains. Since we began meeting, we have had fellow workers actively pushing solidarity unionism on the job and using direct action to gain improvements in working conditions. We have had a few Organizer Trainings in Indiana and are looking to have more in the future. We are also looking to have several members attend a Training for Trainers. We currently have eight delegates throughout the state and have developed a few ways of organizing an all-state GMB. Although some have joked about “The

Indiana Model,” none of these ideas are unique to us—we just put together the kind of program that works for us in Indiana under our current conditions. One thing that distinguishes the Indiana branch from others is that at a GMB meeting we devote a set period of time to an open discussion on a topic that has been previously agreed upon. We have monthly GMB meetings in Indianapolis, but between these, each separate locale has a meeting. Some of these localized meetings that we call General Organizing Committees, or Councils (GOCs), happen fairly frequent, while others occur less often. These GOCs meet with the membership of the GMB from that area, discussing organizing campaigns, events, actions, etc., and help to organize the GMB throughout the state. The GOC meetings cannot vote on official Indiana GMB policy, but function as a solidarity-building meeting place where workers can express themselves and move forward with organizing efforts in their area with the help of their local Wobs. Delegates in each area help to organize the GOCs, but they follow the order of business and rotate meeting officers to help people get used to the meeting structure. This helps to get more people active, especially new members, and also helps to increase retention of membership. We currently have three GOCs set up and are working to set up a fourth in the fall. The GOCs host regular discussions and also guest presentations by fellow workers and students in certain fields (i.e. permaculture, labor history, combating patriarchy, Marxist economic theory, etc.).

Indiana GMB members have had opportunities to participate in a few strike campaigns already. We have been active in tabling and demonstrations. We have worked and set up the first Wobbly job shop in Indiana. Actively organizing in the workplace and helping fellow workers throughout the state when they need support and solidarity, the Indiana GMB has

built a really great network of radicals and labor activists within major cities and college campuses.

Maintaining connections and contact, as well as avoiding decline, is one of the most crucial elements keeping our branch strong. Although setting up secure and reliable means of communicating is important, making sure that we continue to use them and use them correctly is difficult. It is important to set up events and meetings in advance and with good publicity. Using social networking sites helps to reach more people each day, and if used correctly, can continue to bring new possible members out to meetings. Holding call-out meetings for interested workers and students is helpful; many times people will feel more comfortable with their first exposure to the IWW if they can discuss its philosophies, history, and how it intends to organize workers against exploitation and wage slavery.

Indiana, being a “right-to-work” state, poses many problems for traditional craft and trade unions and other business unions. And of course these laws impact the organizing of any labor, but the IWW has many advantages in this system because of its solidarity union model, direct action tactics, and its general disregard for capitalist legislature aimed at killing organized labor. Business unions are busy paying large sums of money to the dizzy and confused Indiana Democrats because the Republicans in this state are forcing so much anti-labor legislation through Congress; it’s a vicious yet enlightening



Wobs at the Indiana University strike in April. Photo: Indiana IWW

cycle. The Indiana GMB has been able to grow, agitate, educate and organize. Workers recognize that the IWW is the best rank-and-file, democratically-run, radical union that will fight for them. The major differences between the IWW and other unions that we are taught upon entering the union are all the reasons why the IWW’s structure and ethos are able to trump “right-to-work” legislation—our voluntary dues system, rank-and-file control, every member being an active organizer, the practice of organizing not only the job but also the worker, and the crown jewel that makes it all possible, industrial unionism. We currently have dual-card carrying members from all the major unions active in Indiana. They work with us and within their other unions to push for more rank-and-file control and to further radicalize their unions.

Given the situation in Indiana, I think it’s important to remember that struggling to improve working conditions to receive more of the wealth we create, and gaining more control over our workplaces and lives, is only the first step in effectively and permanently changing the world we live in. We have built a strong and reliable group of members in our branch, but we need to continue to build, grow, and organize. Struggling to alter our material conditions and liberating ourselves is a very difficult and long road. We shouldn’t be fooled or lose sight by cheap and shortsighted ideas of little substance.

IWW Constitution Preamble

The working class and the employing class have nothing in common. There can be no peace so long as hunger and want are found among millions of working people and the few, who make up the employing class, have all the good things of life. Between these two classes a struggle must go on until the workers of the world organize as a class, take possession of the means of production, abolish the wage system, and live in harmony with the earth.

We find that the centering of the management of industries into fewer and fewer hands makes the trade unions unable to cope with the ever-growing power of the employing class. The trade unions foster a state of affairs which allows one set of workers to be pitted against another set of workers in the same industry, thereby helping defeat one another in wage wars. Moreover, the trade unions aid the employing class to mislead the workers into the belief that the working class have interests in common with their employers.

These conditions can be changed and the interest of the working class upheld only by an organization formed in such a way that all its members in any one industry, or all industries if necessary, cease work whenever a strike or lockout is on in any department thereof, thus making an injury to one an injury to all.

Instead of the conservative motto, “A fair day’s wage for a fair day’s work,” we must inscribe on our banner the revolutionary watchword, “Abolition of the wage system.”

It is the historic mission of the working class to do away with capitalism. The army of production must be organized, not only for the everyday struggle with capitalists, but also to carry on production when capitalism shall have been overthrown. By organizing industrially we are forming the structure of the new society within the shell of the old.

Join the IWW Today

The IWW is a union for all workers, a union dedicated to organizing on the job, in our industries and in our communities both to win better conditions today and to build a world without bosses, a world in which production and distribution are organized by workers ourselves to meet the needs of the entire population, not merely a handful of exploiters.

We are the Industrial Workers of the World because we organize industrially – that is to say, we organize all workers on the job into one union, rather than dividing workers by trade, so that we can pool our strength to fight the bosses together.

Since the IWW was founded in 1905, we have recognized the need to build a truly international union movement in order to confront the global power of the bosses and in order to strengthen workers’ ability to stand in solidarity with our fellow workers no matter what part of the globe they happen to live on.

We are a union open to all workers, whether or not the IWW happens to have representation rights in your workplace. We organize the worker, not the job, recognizing that unionism is not about government certification or employer recognition but about workers coming together to address our common concerns. Sometimes this means striking or signing a contract. Sometimes it means refusing to work with an unsafe machine or following the bosses’ orders so literally that nothing gets done. Sometimes it means agitating around particular issues or grievances in a specific workplace, or across an industry.

Because the IWW is a democratic, member-run union, decisions about what issues to address and what tactics to pursue are made by the workers directly involved.

TO JOIN: Mail this form with a check or money order for initiation and your first month’s dues to: IWW, Post Office Box 180195, Chicago, IL 60618, USA.

Initiation is the same as one month’s dues. Our dues are calculated according to your income. If your monthly income is under \$2000, dues are \$9 a month. If your monthly income is between \$2000 and \$3500, dues are \$18 a month. If your monthly income is over \$3500 a month, dues are \$27 a month. Dues may vary outside of North America and in Regional Organizing Committees (Australia, British Isles, German Language Area).

- ☐ I affirm that I am a worker, and that I am not an employer.
- ☐ I agree to abide by the IWW constitution.
- ☐ I will study its principles and acquaint myself with its purposes.



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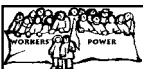
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Shotgun Organizing

By John O'Reilly & Juan Conatz

About a year or so ago, one of us was having a one-on-one conversation with a member of the union involved in a campaign that was not public at the time. When the discussion switched to one of the more active committee members, the fellow worker said, “You know, I love and respect him, but every problem we encounter he wants to shoot down with a 12 gauge.” This gets to an issue we sometimes have that we will call “shotgun organizing.”

The “shotgun organizer” thinks that every problem needs to be solved in the most intense and forceful way possible, regardless of whether or not it can be handled differently or of the effects on the committee. If things are bad, they need to be blasted away. For the shotgun organizer, the union is amazing and the boss is evil and anyone who disagrees is a reactionary. The shotgun organizer takes a blunt, no-holds-barred approach to union activity, and has no room for nuance or collective decision-making. Getting in fights about the union, badgering co-workers who are on the fence, being the first person to stand up to management over grievances, the shotgun organizer knows what they think and makes sure that everyone else does too. It can be good to have folks like this on your side. The willingness to “go to war,” to stand up for people, and be a voice for no compromise is an excellent quality. However, it often can be destructive and alienating.

One of the most difficult parts of organizing is dealing with the problems we encounter with the right response for the right problem. Sometimes we make honest mistakes, misjudging the size or importance of a problem or minimizing something that should be taken more seriously. Part of becoming better organizers is recognizing that we simply will make mistakes no matter how prepared we are, and anticipating how to come back from them. Shotgun organizing is a common style of dealing with problems that come up because, rather than dealing with the complexity of the organizing situation and learning from mistakes, it turns all problems into the *most important problem* and, predictably, uses a 12 gauge to blow them away.

Part of how shotgun organizing manifests as a problem is that the campaign can become about the shotgun-toting worker rather than the issue at hand. For instance, if a certain anti-union co-worker keeps trash-talking the union on the job, a shotgun organizer’s first response might be to confront that worker and start yelling at them about how they’re wrong and stupid. Instead of considering the issue as a committee and coming up with a solution that might work, like having a pro-union friend approach the anti-union person

privately, the shotgun organizer turns the dynamic from being about one problem worker to two people yelling at each other. Most co-workers are going to back away from that. Nobody wants to choose between two people yelling. Our co-workers who back away from the conflict are, by default, choosing against the union and doing exactly what the anti-union worker would have wanted. Sometimes the right way to deal with the problem might be just confronting the anti-union worker. By doing it as one individual instead of as a group, the focus of the controversy is on the shotgun organizer and their yelling, not on the content of the union message.

The change we seek doesn’t happen because of individuals. That’s a common, yet mistaken, vision of history and one that shotgun organizers often see as justifying their behavior. For every “Big Bill” Haywood or Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, there are numerous Henry E. McGuckin’s. For every Durruti, there are hundreds of lesser-known Confederación Nacional del Trabajo (CNT) militants. Struggle is a collective process that doesn’t solely depend on the initiative of individuals willing and able to approach every situation as if it was a full-scale battle. We may remember the names of the “famous” revolutionaries, but we do so because of the quiet, day-to-day work of many around them who are lost to history. Organizing at work is no different. Rather than be One Big Organizer who does everything by themselves, we strive to build up others as organizers. We do this by sharing work and responsibility and encouraging other people to express their opinions. When we do this we see that all organizing work need not be done by one person and that the intensity need not be “turned all the way up” all the time. Change at work and in society has high and low points of intensity, but it operates most effectively when that intensity is brought on by a group, not a lone wolf wielding a big shotgun.

Like anything else humans do, there can be underlying reasons for shotgun organizing. The person may want to rush things because they are feeling burnt out and want to “get it over with.” Maybe they are very excited about the IWW or unionism in general and are letting this high amount of energy drive them completely. Maybe this person could feel like they are the only one “getting things done,” and therefore have to overcompensate for what they feel is less effort from other committee members. These are just a few of the numerous possibilities that might explain this conduct. We should be careful not to assume, though. Instead, we should talk to the fellow worker to get to the heart of the problem. Discovering the underlying reasons why people behave like this can be the first huge step to a solution.

Thinking Feminist, Thinking Revolutionary

By Nicki Meier

Radical unionism requires worker participation, without discrimination, in order to implement worker democracies. This means we must give all members a voice, and we must be conscious of the language we use. Words can be used to silence others or they can be used to foster a safe space that ensures all workers’ voices are heard. To be a strong rank-and-file radical union, we must create a space in which we can hear all workers’ struggles. And in doing so, we will better understand the depth and breadth of the oppression workers face—which is crucial to the abolition of domination.

But in order for us to be truly radical we must be radical in all we do. That means in our individual politics and in our relationships with and to others. This requires an intersectional radical feminist approach. One that understands how deeply intertwined oppressions are with each other; that can analyze and understand that our comrades experience oppression in different and varying ways, because of their (perceived) identities;

and that failing to recognize someone as the combination of these identities is inaccurate and harmful, in and of itself, as it discredits a fellow worker’s experiences.

An intersectional radical feminist approach will require us to place language under a microscope. It is not about stifling “free speech,” but rather about examining our language and its implications and effects. If we want to create a world in which oppression is non-existent, whereby hierarchical structures have been annihilated we must constantly ask ourselves the following key questions:

- What role should language and representation play in the creation of this world?
- Are we speaking by way of patriarchal power structures, where the few dominate the many, where the privileged take precedent over the marginalized?
- If so, how can we change this to create a safe, inclusive, and revolutionary space where we are not simply recreating the power-over structures we see in the “White Supremacist Capitalist Patriarchy”?

We must understand, acknowledge,

and seek to eradicate all oppressive behaviors at their very cores. This will, in part, require us to individually and collectively reexamine, reclaim, and recreate language that is inclusive, non-threatening, and clear.

Within my own branch I have consistently witnessed certain members talking over others. This is a form of silencing them; it is a form of domination. I have seen, and also been a victim of, personal verbal attacks—dismissing a fellow worker’s perspective as over-sensitive or crazy—which again, is a form of domination that works to silence the target. These types of behaviors are unacceptable, and we must work hard to avoid them. I believe we are capable of civil discourse that challenges and pushes each other to think critically. Critical thinking is, after all, at the very center of any transformation, whether personal or systemic. We do not need material or social privilege to change the world, we need critical thinking.

Radicals are proud of their class consciousness and they claim to be conscious of other forms of oppression. Yet within our personal lives and our branches these kinds of behaviors can often be over-

looked. Patriarchal forms of domination are often perpetuated unconsciously by well-intentioned people. We need to make sure that we are calling each other out, practicing self-awareness, and striving to foster diversity that is valued in everything we do.

Accepting that our branches have issues with language, voice and representation is not weakness, it is a space for growth. It is good to acknowledge these instances for growth, for without that realization we cannot move forward. It is when we fail to accept we have room for improvement and when we fail to adapt that we become stagnant.

This may have been articulated best by bell hooks in “Talking Back: Thinking Feminist, Thinking Black” when she wrote, “It is necessary to remember, as we think critically about domination, that we all have the capacity to act in ways that oppress, dominate, wound (whether or not that power is institutionalized). It is necessary to remember that it is first the potential oppressor within that we must resist—the potential victim within that we must rescue—otherwise we cannot hope for an end to domination, for liberation.”



Chapter 67

Protection for Whom?

With the right to vote won, the Women’s Trade Union League campaigned for legislation regulating women’s hours and other conditions of work. The WTUL regarded such legislation as working women’s best protection against exploitation.

Protective legislation curbed abuses, but proved a double-edged sword by excluding women from certain occupations. After World War I, thousands of New York women working as street-car operators, typesetters and telegraphers lost their jobs when the state legislature banned some kinds of night work by women.

Male-dominated craft unions welcomed protective legislation as a way of keeping women out of their trades. This came as no surprise to feminists like Alice Paul of the National Women’s Party, who declared, “Men are not going to make laws which will place women in a position of industrial competition with them.” The NWP gained the mistrust of female trade unionists by lining up with big business to oppose protective legislation.



Conflict sharpened in 1923 when the NWP proposed an Equal Rights Amendment that would have outlawed protective legislation. Said Melinda Scott of the United Textile Workers: “The National Women’s Party does not know what it is to work 10 or 12 hours a day in a factory; so they do not know what it means to lose an eight-hour day law. The working women do know, and that’s why they are unanimously opposing this amendment.”

The real answer lie in union organization, but the American Federation of Labor was unwilling to take on the job of organizing the millions of unorganized workers, male and female.

Graphic: Mike Konopacki

Wobbly & North American News

IWW Organizer Training In Uganda A Success

By Weijagye Justus

The recent success of the Organizer Training which took place on Aug. 25 and Aug. 27 at the Kirigiime Guest House in Kabale, Uganda, and the fast developments our opposition and strikes towards the ruling class and the bosses, are positive achievements for the working class and motivation in the struggle against the forces of exploitation, oppression and suppression.

These and other worker-initiated developments against the employing class and ruling class is an indicator of the success of the workers' struggles and general struggle against wage slavery.

This calls for all members of the working class to work together as one unified force in the name of the all workers' union, the IWW, and fight for the revolutionary and evolutionary achievements where everyone counts in as not only part of the workers' history of struggles but also participates in the making of that history.

We therefore call on all members of



Training in Kabale. Photo: Weijagye Justus

the working class to join the IWW not only for bringing positive changes to their workplaces, but also in moving forward the revolution to abolish the wage system and wage slavery. The more of you who join us, the stronger we shall be and the more changes we shall bring to the members of working class.

Donate to IWW organizing efforts in Uganda: <http://www.indiegogo.com/projects/organising-the-working-class-in-uganda>.

Labor Day Celebrated In Virginia City, Nevada



Wobs on Labor Day.

Photo: Ron Kaminkow

By Ron Kaminkow

More than two dozen Wobblies and their allies marched in the annual Labor Day parade in Virginia City, Nev., on Sept. 2. Over 100 years earlier, the Story County local of the IWW marched down this same street on Labor Day 1908. Following the parade, Wobblies toured the Virginia City Miners Union Hall, home to the Comstock Miners' Union that gave birth to hard rock miners' unions throughout the west, resulting in the formation of the Western Federation of Miners.

Entire Shoe Store Staff Quits In Rochester

By John Kalwaic

At the beginning of September, the entire staff of the Journeys footwear and apparel store, in Rochester, N.Y.'s Marketplace Mall, quit due to the abusive behavior of the store manager. The manager apparently did not give an employee time off for cancer treatment, which enraged the staff.

The staff left a note at the closed store. A picture of the note that has gone viral



Photo: reddit.com

over the internet is now being called "The Declaration of Independence from a Shitty Mall Job."

The store, which sells items for kids and teenagers, was then closed during the middle of back-to-school week, which will no doubt cost the store a lot of money. This is one example of employee resistance in a non-traditional form.

With files from Gawker.com.

Los Angeles IWW Honors Ricardo Flores Magón With Evening Of Entertainment

By Diana Barahona

The Los Angeles branch of the IWW and community members filled Beyond Baroque in Venice on Aug. 9 for an evening of music and drama honoring the branch's namesake, Ricardo Flores Magón.

Opening the show, song-fighter Ross Altman performed "The Rebel Girl," "There is a Power in the Union" and "The Preacher and the Slave"—all written by Joe Hill, the legendary Wobbly singer and songwriter. It was in Ross Altman's hometown of San Pedro where Hill, a 30-year-old migrant laborer, joined the IWW in 1910. These songs were particularly relevant to the theme of the event, since they highlighted the solidarity that existed between the IWW and Mexican revolutionaries in Los Angeles in the second decade of the 20th century.

Ross then performed international songs of struggle—"A Las Barricadas," a revolutionary song from the Spanish Civil War, "Guantanamera" and his own original song about the Mexican Revolution.

Next, Rubén Martínez took the stage with Chicano Son artist Marco Amador. They performed music and readings from his show (which aired on PBS last year), "The Ballad of Ricardo Flores Magón"—a tribute to the revolutionary anarchist who lived and struggled in Los Angeles from 1904 until he was arrested for the last time

in 1918. Martínez wrote this work in order to unearth the radical roots of the Occupy movement, taking us back to a time when Los Angeles was one of the "reddest" cities in America.

As Martínez wrote in the *Los Angeles Times*, just days after the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) had brutally removed the Occupy L.A. encampment from Solidarity Park:

"The scene Magón joined in Los Angeles was an early 20th century version of the Occupy movement. There were raucous rallies at the plaza, festive fundraisers at the Italian Hall and plenty of run-ins with the LAPD."

The *Los Angeles Times* itself has played a significant historical role in defense of the ruling class, attacking organized labor, socialists, anarchists and Wobblies in its pages. Martínez reported:

"Trials of the radicals were heavily covered by *The Times*, whose general manager, Harrison Gray Otis, seethed against anarchists in general, whom he blamed for the 1910 bombing of *The Times* Building, and against Flores Magón in particular. Otis owned upward of a million acres of land across the border in Baja California, and an armed contingent of 'Magonistas' associated with Flores Magón's Partido Liberal Mexicano [PLM] briefly took control of Tijuana and other parts of Baja in 1911."

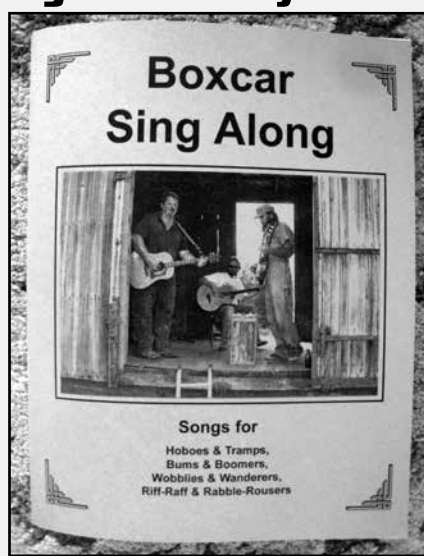
Get Your New Wobbly Songbook Today!

By Baltimore Red, X341189

Long-time Wobbly, hobo and rail-roader "Baltimore Red" has produced a new songbook entitled "Boxcar Sing Along: Songs for Hoboes & Tramps, Bums & Boomers, Wobblies & Wanderers, Riff-Raff & Rabble-Rousers." This book of 64 classic railroad, hobo and union songs is fully illustrated with photos and graphics dating back to the 19th century.

The book includes songs of tramp, hobo, Wobbly and railroad themes, and includes classics such as: "Waiting for A Train" (Jimmy Rogers); "Ramblin' Fever" (Merle Haggard); "Queen of the Rails" (Utah Phillips); "This Train is Bound for Glory" (Woody Guthrie); "The Big Rock Candy Mountain" (Haywire Mac McClintock); "The Midnight Special" (Leadbelly); "Milwaukee Blues" (Charlie Poole); "Only a Hobo" (Bob Dylan); "The Tramp" (Joe Hill); and "The Popular Wobbly" (T-Bone Slim). Each song is complete with all lyrics and music. Many songs have historic notes and the book is illustrated throughout with photographs of hobos and tramps from the turn of the century, the Great Depression, the post-steam era and modern times.

There is a new breed of itinerant musicians out on the road today, hopping freight trains and booming around the country, working odd jobs and playing on the street for nickels and dimes. Many are once again interested in the songs of working people of a bygone era. The object of this book is to preserve these old songs and re-introduce them to this new generation of musicians. The Black Butte Center for Railroad Culture (BBCRC) in



Graphic: Baltimore Red, X341189

Weed, Calif., is making this book available to such musicians free of charge when they lack the financial resources to make a donation. For those of you who would like a copy and can donate, the suggested donation is \$15 (includes all shipping and handling). In donating, you are assisting us to print copies that can be given away cheaply or free to those who are financially down-and-out. After that, all proceeds go to benefit the BBCRC and support its mission (see the website <http://www.bbrc.org> for more information).

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Madison Solidarity Singers Arrested

By John Kalwaic

Long after the media lost its focus on Wisconsin's struggle against Governor Scott Walker to keep public sector workers' bargaining rights in 2011, the Solidarity Singers are keeping the struggle alive. The singers have been coming to Madison every week to sing harmless labor songs as well as other social justice songs from the 1960s. However, Walker has ordered that singing at the Capitol rotunda in Madison is now illegal, despite the building being a public space. Many singers, some in their 60s and 70s,

have been arrested. The Capitol police did not stop there. They also arrested onlookers who were recording the incidents with their cell phones.



Photo: Jenna Pope, Labor Notes

The protestors' struggles against the attacks on public sector bargaining rights and other issues have piqued the interest of civil liberties groups who say Walker's measures against the singers are unconstitutional. The arrests

and the singers have breathed new life into a movement which was thought to be dead by some.

With files from Labor Notes.



Rubén Martínez (left) and Marco Amador (right) perform.

Photo: Diana Barahona

at age 49. Martínez performed "I'm Writing You From Inside," based on letters Magón wrote from Leavenworth which talk about his resolve to continue to resist the oppression of state power, even as he suffers from failing health, exacerbated by neglect by prison staff.

After performing Woodie Guthrie's "All You Fascists are Bound to Lose," Martínez and Amador took questions from the audience. Finally Ross Altman joined them on stage and led the singing of "Solidarity Forever," the IWW's anthem.

Beyond Baroque is an independent literary and arts center and public space that has hosted many cutting-edge poets and musical talents through the years.

Special

Striking Workers At Insomnia Cookies Join The IWW



Insomnia workers fight for better conditions. Photo: FW Le Le LeChat

Continued from 1

At 3 a.m. the regional manager, who runs the only Insomnia Cookies in Massachusetts, arrived to file the paperwork to fire all four strikers. He then called Luke Robinson to threaten him with a lawsuit for “violating contractual obligations,” said Helali. The store did not open again until 1 p.m. on Sunday, Aug. 18, two hours later than usual.

Picketing began that morning at 10 a.m., and all of the strikers were on the line by 11 a.m. The police, according to Helali, “came about eight or nine times and told us to stay away, do not bother the store...They said we’d be arrested if we went inside. They told us to stay on the center median, about 30 feet from the store or we would be arrested.” While workers have a legal right to picket on the sidewalk outside their store, as long as they remain moving in a circle or otherwise, the police called in by the boss intimidated the workers.

That afternoon members of the IWW arrived to lend support. Helali, who reached out to the union, said, “I knew that the IWW in Boston [were] pretty militant and ready to go straight to action, as opposed to some of the business unions who probably would not even come or try to organize us. I knew the IWW would do everything in their power to help us out. So I decided to reach out on the Facebook page and post about our strike.” One organizer

arrived around noon, and by 3:30 p.m. five others had arrived. On Tuesday, all four strikers joined the IWW and held a meeting with union organizers.

On Thursday, the strikers and their union held a march from the Harvard Square T Station to the store with 50 IWW members and allies, including Harvard dining hall workers, members of Harvard Student Labor Action Movement, Common Struggle/Lucha Común, Boston Solidarity Network and others participating.

Insomnia workers marched to their shop again on Monday evening, following a union rally against racially-motivated firings at Harvard University organized by the Harvard No Layoffs Campaign led by “dual card” members of the IWW and the Harvard Union of Clerical and Technical Workers (HUTCW). Onsomnia worker Jonathan Peña addressed the crowd. Around 50 people, including students from the Harvard Student Labor Action Movement, joined the march from Harvard to the Insomnia location, surprising the manager and leafleting the public.

While the workers at Insomnia had not joined a union prior to striking, some workers had been discussing workplace conditions, unions, and strikes for weeks. According to Helali, he and other workers “would speak about the issues that pertain to our job and the conditions there. I heard a lot of the other workers” gripes, what they wanted to be changed, how they felt they were treated. I tried to gauge the general overall feeling, and concerns of the workers. It prompted me to eventually put the idea out for a strike, as a joke at first maybe about two weeks before the strike. I’d sort of casually say, ‘hey we

should go out on strike... why not?’”

Along with low pay, no benefits, and unrealistic expectations on the part of the company, workers complained about a lack of breaks. According to Helali, “Customers would flood in and sometimes we’d have to have all of us up front helping. It was constant on our feet. Rarely did we get an opportunity to sit down and relax.” It was the pressure of the crowd of hungry customers that finally drove these workers to strike. However, in not contacting the union prior to striking and not organizing the day shift to join the strike or a union, the strikers began at a disadvantage. With dedication to their cause and plenty of support from the IWW and other allies, strikers hope to overcome the obstacles in front of them and turn Insomnia Cookies into a job worth having and to spread the union to the Insomnia Cookies locations near college campuses across the country.

The Insomnia strike began just a week and a half before a national wave of fast food workers’ strikes organized by the Service Employees International Union (SEIU). On Thursday, Aug. 29, fast food workers across the country participated in a one-day strike for a \$15 minimum wage,

highlighted in Boston by a 4 p.m. rally at the Boston Common. As Jonathan Peña told the *Industrial Worker*, “We want to show solidarity with the struggles of other fast food workers because their fight is our fight.” Insomnia workers were present at the Fight for Fifteen pickets in Boston beginning that morning at 6 a.m. and ending with an evening picket at Insomnia in Harvard Square at 6 p.m.

While half of the striking Insomnia workers have moved from Boston this September, the other two workers are continuing to plan public demonstrations and discuss unionization with their co-workers, Harvard students, and other service workers, while they pursue legal charges against their employer for withholding breaks and back pay and failing to meet minimum wage.

The company plans to open a new location near Boston University in the near future, plans that may have been delayed by the ongoing strike.

For updates and information on how to contribute to the strike fund or get involved, please visit <https://www.facebook.com/insomniaunion> or <http://iwwboston.org>.



Boston Wobblies on the picket line.

Photo: FW Le Le LeChat

Reports, Discussion Abound At The 2013 IWW General Convention



Delegates discuss the important issues.

Photo: DJ Alperovitz

Continued from 1

and their work evaluated, so that we can ensure quality across all trainings.

The most contentious report was that of the *Industrial Worker’s* editor since she, the General Executive Board (GEB), and the GST have come to a decision to distribute the paper digitally by default, unless the member asks to receive a hard copy. Many delegates had questions and the editor, the GST as well as members of the GEB had the occasion to address the opposition of certain members and elaborate on the reasons that motivated this decision. I believe this discussion clarified things. From my interpretation, the decision was made because of financial concerns (i.e. that the printing and shipping costs had increased

too much in comparison to the revenues) but also because the board, the editor, and the GST felt that there was some waste in the sense that resources allocated to printing and distributing the paper were too high for the actual need. A lot of papers were left to rot at GHQ because of the fact that we need to print more than we distribute. Also, a lot of members

read the PDF version already and throw the copy they receive straight into the recycling bin.

On Sunday, we moved on to working on the motions. There were two sets of them, a few emergency motions and motions that had been submitted on time to be included officially in the agenda. The first official motion was a constitutional amendment made in the spirit of adjusting the language of the structures used in workplace organizing to reflect actual practices. The job branches, which have no specified rights or responsibilities in the current version of the constitution, would be removed to follow the organizational committee’s approach that is closer to our current methods. The merits of letting

shops use the union logo were discussed at length. Some delegates argued that our revolutionary mindset should prevent us from helping companies make sales by having the union bug on their product, others contended that a lot of workers made purchasing decisions based on the fact that products or services were made by unionized workers. In the end the motion passed as it was written, including the possibility to use the union bug. The second official motion, also a constitutional amendment, was aimed at modifying how charges are handled at conventions. The purpose of the motion was twofold: first, to guarantee that the charges are dealt with as much fairness as possible, which implies allocating enough time to review them—which isn’t possible in two days; and second, to allow all delegates to participate in union business rather than spend valuable convention time serving on a charges committee. The motion basically calls for a committee to be formed to deal with the charges over a longer period of time, rather than have one committee formed by convention delegates—which would rush the charges process during the two days of the con-

vention. Both these motions will be put on the ballot sent to all members so that they can vote on their addition to the constitution.

The convention left me with a very positive impression about the state of our union. Everyone was extremely serious about the work that needed to be done. The civil discussions were always carried out with the aim of finding concrete solutions to issues rather than petty politicking. The ability of the Edmonton branch to run this convention in such an efficient way inspired me to continue to work hard at building our local branch so that we could one day do the same. If the delegates that were at this year’s convention are typical of our membership, our union has a great future.



Wobblies sing “Solidarity Forever.”

Photo: Diane Krauthamer

IWW History

The First Annual Frank Little Memorial Gathering

By Jim Del Duca

On Saturday, Aug. 3, Montana and Idaho Wobblies gathered in Butte, Mont., for the First Annual Frank Little Memorial Gathering. A combination of memorial service, union solidarity picnic, and organizing meeting, the gathering commemorated the life of our renowned IWW organizer Frank Little and marked the anniversary of his Aug. 1, 1917 assassination.

Former General Executive Board (GEB) member and fearless revolutionary organizer, FW Little was invited to Butte by a delegation of local copper miners to represent the IWW. This came in response to the disastrous fires in the Granite Mountain/Speculator Mine which killed 168 hard rock miners on June 8, 1917. The capitalists who controlled the Butte mines were making huge profits from the copper extracted from the miles of mineshafts beneath the city. This is because copper was, and still is, a key component of armament manufacture. Small arms cartridges and artillery shell casings, made of brass (a copper alloy), were being expended by the millions on the battlefields of World War I era Europe, and killing millions of the working class. This made the mines of Butte vital to both simple corporate profits and international capitalist war interests. Bosses were not concerned that miners had a more dangerous job than soldiers—profits and social order, as always, were their top priorities.

The miners of Butte, recognizing that their only hope for physical safety and social justice would be through collective bargaining, and knowing that they needed help from outside of boss-controlled Montana, formed a union and attempted to affiliate with the politically-powerful American Federation of Labor (AFL). The AFL insisted that the miners disband their new union and join the AFL as individuals, effectively giving away their local control to outside (capitalist-friendly) interests. The Butte miners refused to sell out and called upon the one organization courageous enough to challenge the capitalists, our own Industrial Workers of the World.

The IWW was under no illusions as to the difficulty of the task at hand. To succeed in organizing under the circumstances at Butte would require the best of the best in organizing ability. At the request of then GEB Chair “Big Bill” Haywood, FW Little accepted the dangerous

assignment. FW Little was known far and wide as a fearless and brilliant revolutionary organizer. Originally from Indian Territory-Oklahoma, he was described as “half Indian, half white, and all IWW.” He had held numerous critical organizing positions in high-profile IWW campaigns, demonstrated exceptional ability, and was well-known across the United States and Canada as an implacable foe of capitalism and a selfless champion of the working class.

Calling soldiers “Uncle Sam’s scabs in uniforms” and holding that warfare only furthers the aims of the bosses, he firmly believed that the IWW should actively discourage workers from joining the military. “The IWW is opposed to all wars,” Little commented. While some within the IWW were unsure if publicly opposing the war would be strategically wise for the organization—and there was real fear that the bosses and their tools in government would become even more aggressive in their attacks against the IWW—FW Little was uncompromising in his open opposition. “Better to go out in a blaze of glory than to give in,” he stated. “Either we’re for this capitalistic slaughterfest, or we’re against it. I’m ready to face the firing squad rather than compromise.” The reference to the firing squad was not just dramatic wording. Our premier Wobbly musical propagandist, Joe Hill, had been framed and executed by firing squad in Salt Lake City only a few years prior. Hill’s talents, skills and convictions made him a tremendous threat to the capitalist class.

Before the Granite Mountain/Speculator disaster there were roughly 16,000 unorganized miners in Butte, an “open-shop” policy, and a system of black listing that was intended to prevent union miners from securing employment. After the 168 fatalities in the mine fires, the Butte workers were deeply disturbed. A spontaneous and unorganized walk-out developed. The three existing Butte miners’ unions (with only a few hundred members) were not

ready to respond to the situation. A new union was formed, the Metals Mine Workers’ Union (MMWU), led by two former IWW members. Membership quickly grew to 12,000. The new organization was immediately attacked by the boss-owned press. The worker’s demands for increases in safety and wages were rejected and the owners refused to recognize the legitimacy of the MMWU. The new union then voted to continue the strike. Soon over 15,000 mine workers were refusing to work. The pressure was building in this vortex of capitalists vs. working-class confrontation.

After FW Little arrived in Butte, he twice addressed crowds of over 6,000 min-



Wobs at Frank Little’s grave.

Photo: Jim Del Duca

ers and was invited to participate in the MMWU high-level strategy meetings. He contributed one central message, the winning IWW strategy, of solidarity among all the workers. If the MMWU could stay focused and accomplish that, then the power of the bosses would be broken, and a new day would dawn for the workers. The IWW had been successful in the past and the workers were ready to act. The extreme danger to corporate control was obvious. As a result, at some high level of the corporate association, the decision was made to have FW Little killed. In the early hours of Aug. 1, masked men, who identified themselves as officers of the law, entered the hotel where FW Little was lodging. They took him by force, tied him, dragged him through the city streets behind an automobile, and then hanged him by the neck from a railroad trestle. No arrests were ever made—not surprising considering that the prime suspects, at least from the view of the miners, were all city police officers.

After the murder of FW Little, the capitalists applied overwhelming force to break the Butte strike and regain complete control. Martial law was declared and federal troops were deployed to occupy Butte where they remained to protect the bosses for the next four years. Their commander was future-general Capt. Omar Bradley.

The soldiers made it clear that any serious challenge to the mine owners would be met with machine gun fire. The strike went on, but eventually failed, as workers were shot, starved out, or persuaded to return to the mines with small hand-outs. On the national scale, the capitalist-controlled federal government used the events in Butte to initiate a wave of repression against the IWW. Even today, the Sedition Act of 1918, a set of amendments to the Espionage Act of 1917, is used by the government to prosecute government whistle-blowers and anti-war resisters (e.g. Edward Snowden), and it is a direct result of the threat posed by the IWW. The Sedition Act of 1918 has been used to imprison hundreds of Wobblies and countless others, and is a key component in government persecution of anti-war activists. The law was tailor-made to convict and imprison Wobblies and other enemies of capitalism. That the law is still in force, and is still actively being used against the working class, is testimony to the revolutionary legacy of FW Frank Little.

Montana and Idaho Wobblies are intent on growing the union. The Annual Frank Little Memorial Gathering is being developed as our yearly opportunity to coordinate, network and strategize for organizing in our area. Further, a committee was formed to advocate for Butte to be the scene of a major IWW event to commemorate the centennial of FW Little’s assassination. While currently lacking a General Membership Branch, Butte still has a strong Wobbly presence, and area members feel that the propaganda opportunities connected to such an event would be considerable. The capitalist legacy in Butte is the huge, city-swallowing excavation known as the “Berkely Pit,” which has the distinction of being the largest superfund toxic waste site in North America. It is stark and undeniable testimony of what capitalism does to the earth as well as the people.

Wobblies are currently actively agitating and organizing in several Montana locations including Billings, Bozeman, Butte and Missoula. Membership is growing, with a healthy mix of older Wobblies and young workers new to the movement. Members interested in becoming part of the 2017 Butte-Frank Little Centennial Planning Committee are encouraged to contact Jim Del Duca at jdd@iww.org.

Opinion

Socialists And The Animal Question

By Jon Hochschartner

Despite continuous government repression of animal activists, in many ways it has never been an easier time to be a vegetarian or vegan. One can find a wide selection of food without animal products in the most unlikely of places, such as in the small towns of upstate New York, where the typical accoutrement is not tie-dye, but a NASCAR cap. The national vegan population is increasing rapidly, which according to a Harris Interactive poll has doubled between 2009 and 2011. Even so, much of the socialist left remains particularly inhospitable for those concerned with animal domestication.

This hostility goes back a long way. As Dr. Steve Best points out, Karl Marx and Frederick Engels “lumped animal welfarists, vegetarians, and anti-vivisectionists into the same petite-bourgeoisie category comprised of charity organizers, temperance fanatics, and naïve reformists.” Leon Trotsky railed against those opposed to revolutionary violence, scornfully describing their ideology as “vegetarian-Quaker prattle.”

Things aren’t that different today. Paul D’Amato, a writer for whom I otherwise have a good deal of respect, took on the animal question in a *Socialist Worker* column which reads as little more than uninformed trolling.

“Does a mountain lion that kills a

deer have a right to a trial by a jury of its peers?” he asks ridiculously. “Should cows have freedom of assembly, speech and religion?”

He acknowledges he is speaking tongue-in-cheek, but insists “...there is a point to it.” D’Amato goes on to recount Adolph Hitler’s animal protection efforts because, as you know, animal activists are actually closet Nazis.

Things are hardly any different on the anarchist side of the aisle. For instance, log onto the Libcom.org forums, which are maintained by London-based libertarian communists, and ask, as I have, these otherwise nice folks what they think of vegetarians or vegans. And you’ll see that the British didn’t get their reputation for beef-eating for nothing.

And yet animal activists have always been part of progressive change. John Oswald, for instance, was a Scottish vegetarian and member of the Jacobin Club who took part in the French Revolution, and died fighting monarchist forces. Élisée Reclus, also a vegetarian, was a participant in the Paris Commune of 1871, for which he was imprisoned and exiled. Of course, well-known vegetarian Mahatma Gandhi led the movement to topple British colonialism in India. Cesar Chavez, a vegan, co-founded the organization that would become the United Farm Workers union. One could go on with such examples but I

would prefer to hear from readers of historical figures they know who incorporated animals in their progressive vision. I am most interested in hearing of leaders who were women, people of color or engaged in explicit class struggle.

In a preface to an edition of “Animal Farm,” George Orwell explained the central metaphor of his satirical novel, writing, “Men exploit animals in much the same way as the rich exploit the proletariat.” Modern animal activists such as Bob Torres and David Nibert have expanded on this unifying theme, injecting Marxist thought into the emerging field of critical animal studies. But there has been no similar effort on the part of anti-capitalists.

I don’t expect the socialist left to suddenly develop an appetite for veggie burgers and almond milk ice cream. The broad movement anti-capitalists hope to create will be reflective of the masses. And veganism is just not where the masses are yet. Much of this has to do with vegan options, at least the processed ones, being prohibitively expensive. This will change when economies of scale come into play.

But the attitude toward animal rights among the socialist left is more reactionary than that of the general population. My low-wage co-workers might think my views regarding non-humans are privileged and eccentric, but they never display the vitriolic scorn my beliefs earn among

the socialist left.

My theory is that large segments of the socialist left, which at the moment is disproportionately made up of white-collar workers, have adopted a misguided workerism. It is a perspective that glorifies a crude caricature of blue-collar culture, in an attempt to bond with those on lowest tiers of the capitalist system. To these more privileged members of the working class, casual indifference to animal exploitation is a defining trait of blue-collar workers. That this is immensely condescending should go without saying. But it’s also not based on a socialist understanding of class. For socialists, economic groups are not defined by eating habits, culture or even income. They’re defined by someone’s relationship to the means of production.

My class struggle resume isn’t anything to write home about. But it’s not something I’m embarrassed about either. I’ve written for a variety of leftist publications, from *Socialist Worker* to *Z Magazine*. I was active in the Occupy movement, for which I spent a couple days in jail. I filed charges against my employer, and won a settlement, for union busting. I’ve made some humble contributions, but I’m also a vegan. And I’m sick of feeling I’ll be treated like the late comedian Rodney Dangerfield—no respect!—if I don’t hide my feelings in socialist circles.

Special

The Parallels Between The Sisters’ Camelot &

By Travis Elise & Robbie Jenson
Travis & Robbie are members of the Jimmy John’s Workers Union and the Twin Cities General Membership Branch of the IWW. This is Part 2 of an article in which they discuss the similarities between the struggles at Jimmy John’s and Sisters’ Camelot. Part 1 appeared on pages 1 & 6 of the September IW.

This is the first we have heard of your concerns. If we had known, we would have gladly made things better. You can use existing ways to engage with the business so we can fix problems by working together. We will do things to show our appreciation of you and make it easier for you to come to us.

Many workers go to management with grievances when they first arise; we are conditioned to seek help from authority figures, whether they are parents, teachers, police officers or bosses. This is rarely ever effective in the workplace, however, because management is typically more removed from the grievance or because resolving it is simply not in their self-interest. This is frustrating and demoralizing for workers, especially those who genuinely care about their work. It is more productive for workers to talk to management collectively or to implement solutions together through direct action. When workers realize that their problems are common problems based on shared experiences, they are able to assert their needs more strongly together.

In the past, canvass directors and canvassers for Sisters’ Camelot have unsuccessfully attempted to individually lobby the collective to improve the working conditions of the canvassers without success, causing many canvassers and directors to leave on bad terms. Even the simple fact that the canvass workers have to go to an authority with their ideas, needs and demands debunks the idea that Sisters’ Camelot is an organization based on worker control. In an organization that allegedly values social justice and direct action, the canvassers should be able to implement their ideas for improving their conditions and performance at work without seeking approval from anyone above them.

In an anti-union drive, bosses will always offer concessions that serve both as gestures to placate the workers and as mechanisms for challenging the power of the union by roping workers back into systems that are controlled by management. The solution proposed (and major concession made) by the bosses has been for canvassers to join the collective. By offering them spots on the collective, the bosses are individualizing the workers in an attempt to divide and conquer. One canvasser on the collective can easily

become overpowered and demoralized while the other canvassers remain entirely disempowered. The same thing occurred when Hardy Coleman, a former canvass director and then collective member, attempted to implement changes identical to many of the demands presented by the canvassers to the collective. It happened again when Bobby Becker was a member of the collective and became the sole advocate for the canvassers. There’s no reason to believe things will be any different if a different canvasser or two were to become collective members. At Jimmy John’s, bosses gave out raises and had one-on-one conversations with workers to try to legitimize their so-called “open door policy” and hinder the collective action of the workers.

The canvassers are in agreement about what they need in order to improve their work environment and do a better job. They shouldn’t need to join another body of the organization in order to make changes related to their work. Additionally, they shouldn’t need to take on the responsibility of making decisions about other programs carried out by the organization if they don’t want to. Part of the problem in this situation is that workers within the organization have the power to make decisions about the entire organization while others have no decision-making power at all. It is the right of all workers to control their own work environment and processes, and no other group needs to do that for them. Additionally, no worker should have to work unpaid time (a requirement for being part of the collective) to have a say on the job.

We are workers, too. We have worked hard to build this business and deserve your respect. Your organizing is hurtful to us. We are victims of your organizing.

In anti-union drives, bosses like to emphasize the fact that they also show up to work, contribute to the success of the business, or perhaps started it themselves. They like to play the victim card, insisting that workers’ organizing is uncalled for, offensive, hurtful and disrespectful. In this way, management and/or owners try to frame the union drive as a personal matter and try to draw attention to themselves. They often say the organizing drive is unfair and that there are more appropriate ways to engage with the company in order to offer suggestions or express concerns. This argument also veils a threat: if you organize, you will betray me and I will make your life at work hellish. At Jimmy John’s, as with most businesses, preferential treatment is offered to workers who are in the good graces of management by being particularly reverent to authorities or doing personal favors. During the anti-union drive at Jimmy John’s, work-

ers were generally mistreated, including being denied raises because they declared union support, while others were given promotions and raises for taking the side of the company.

Of course, the Sisters’ Camelot collective members do work and perform important functions for the organization’s operations and programs. This is not, however, about the collective, and no canvasser has spoken ill of work done in their programs. The issue at hand is simply that one group of workers has power over their own work and that of an entirely different group of workers, leaving the latter disenfranchised. To make this union out to be an attack on Sisters’ Camelot as an organization or the collective members as workers is classist and narrow-minded. It ignores workers who lack their own autonomy, and it indicates a defense of capitalist hierarchies. Denying any worker their basic right alongside their fellow workers, and to exert control over their own work by refusing to relinquish your power is, well, exactly what Jimmy John’s did. And it is done partly out of a love for control and authority, partly out of a distrust of the workforce that is fundamentally rooted in classism, and partly out of a desire to continue to control the flow of capital. This is painfully similar to the situation unfolding at Sisters’ Camelot. The bosses at Sisters’ don’t trust the workers nor do they show any indication of giving up any of their power. The collective has explicitly stated they don’t trust the canvassers with things such as credit card information. The collective has also said the structural changes would be “unhealthy” for Sisters’ Camelot and that there must be “accountability” in place. By accountability, they obviously mean accountability to the collective. To say the canvass should be accountable to the collective but not vice versa is incredibly disrespectful and belittling.

The union drive could cause the business to close. We simply can’t afford to have a union.

Management will jump to the worst possible scenario in an anti-union drive. In many ways, this is meant to play on the fears of workers. It plays into the idea that workers should feel lucky to even have a job in an effort to undermine their dignity and their basic right to make a living and have control over their work. Sure, all businesses will be affected by some of the direct action tactics used by workers when they organize, including strikes, but this is a necessary part of forcing people in power to relinquish the power that does not belong to them. At Jimmy John’s, the company threatened to do away with bike delivery, claiming they would be unable to afford the insurance policy with the added cost of having a union. Similarly, the collective at Sisters’ Camelot threatened to replace the canvassers with volunteers.

When it comes to Sisters’ Camelot, this argument is simply ludicrous. Few of the canvassers’ demands are economic; most are structural and related to improving workplace democracy. The only two non-negotiable money-related demands are professional van maintenance and medical bills paid for work-related injuries. Professional van maintenance is a no-brainer. Without a reliably functioning van, canvassers have had shortened and



Jimmy John’s workers picket. Photo: twincities.indymedia.org

missed shifts; since the canvassers raise 95 percent of the organization’s operating budget, this obviously affects the organization’s financial status. As far as medical bills go, it’s a basic worker’s right. All employees should be entitled to workers’ compensation for workplace injuries, and if Sisters’ Camelot refuses to accept this demand, they are worse than even the most sinister corporation by taking advantage of their contracted workers.

There are also negotiable demands that indisputably will increase productivity within the canvass operation, such as accepting credit card donations at the door. Other demands will improve the canvasser’s experiences at work and encourage them to do better work, like paid sick days and vacation, a 5 percent base pay raise, an extra bonus for working four shifts per week in addition to raising \$500 per week, and access for the canvass coordinator to view online donations. All of these ideas would encourage canvassers to invest themselves more strongly in their work, which directly affects the income of the organization as a whole. The primary reason for opposing these demands is not financial; it is because of a lack of trust that, like Jimmy John’s, is a backward, classist, and selfish tendency that is keeping Sisters’ Camelot from truly realizing its alleged goal as a worker-controlled organization.

The last point related to money is simple: no demand costs an organization more than an anti-union drive. The collective has attempted to paint the economic demands of the union as too costly to the organization. This anti-union drive is costing Sisters’ Camelot far more money than they would incur by giving the workers a 5 percent raise and increase in their fundraising bonuses. In fact, the organization itself is on the brink of collapse. Programming has been cut, they are planning on moving out of their warehouse space and the collective members can’t even afford to pay themselves anymore.

At Jimmy John’s, the bosses spent about \$3,000 a day over the course of a month and a half on a union-busting consulting firm called the Labor Relations Institute. They also spent an incredible amount of money on lawyers and legal fees fighting the Unfair Labor Practice (ULP) charges we filed against them. Additionally, the pickets we held at stores, the phone blasts we did that shut down over-the-phone delivery orders at stores, and

Continued on next page

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Special

Jimmy John's Anti-Union Campaigns: Part 2

Continued from previous page

the negative media attention the company received during the union drive certainly reduced their revenue. In all, simply giving us what we were demanding (a \$1 per hour raise for all drivers and supervisors and a \$2 per hour raise for all in-shoppers) would have cost them less money than fighting us for so long. The threat that unions will bring financial hardship to a company is typically nothing but an empty threat to scare the workers.

The IWW is an aggressive organization with scary politics that is using you to achieve its political agenda. They will harass and trick you. We can protect you from them.

In all union drives, unions in general are criticized (even while praised, as mentioned earlier). Attention will be drawn to various aspects of unions that can be framed in an unpopular light. These aspects include expensive mandatory union dues, union bureaucrats making decisions on the workers' behalf, a complicated grievance process, and dues money being given to politicians without the workers' input.

In the IWW, none of these criticisms apply since our union doesn't share those characteristics common to other unions. Instead, we Wobblies are criticized in other ways. Most commonly we are red-baited. At Jimmy John's, we were called radicals, anarchists, communists, socialists, anti-capitalists, anti-Americans, terrorists (yes, seriously!), troublemakers, zealots and so on. We were told that we were being aggressive toward the company and attempting to bully the bosses into submission. We were accused of violent tactics including sabotaging the company's equipment and inventory of products. During our sick day campaign and subsequent firings, the company's lawyers tried to argue our campaign for sick days constituted extortion.

At Sisters' Camelot, similar accusations have been levied against the canvassers. They have been accused of being aggressive and being bullies for simply making demands and going on strike after the collective refused to negotiate with them. When the canvassers escalated and turned up the pressure, the collective members (and their friends who were also targeted) became downright hysterical. At Jimmy John's, when we announced ourselves as the Jimmy John's Workers Union (JJWU) and presented our demands, the bosses thought we were being aggressive. When we actually became aggressive, our bosses demonized us even more. However, they did begin to give in on some demands, including less tangible ones like better treatment of workers by management. The lesson to be learned here is that bosses don't respond to simple requests to change things at work. They aren't convinced by others moralizing or arguing with them. They are convinced when it's in their own

self-interest to change. And that usually comes about when severe economic, social, and/or emotional pressure is put on them. Exerting these types of pressure was the JJWU strategy and it is also the Sisters' Camelot Canvass Union's strategy, and the strategy of all militant unions.

A cornerstone in the union busting arsenal, used by the bosses against unions of all stripes including the IWW, is to paint the union as a separate entity from the workers themselves with a separate agenda from the workers. We call this "third party-ing" the union.

At Jimmy John's, this message was a core part of the bosses' narrative. In one of the company's propaganda posters they stated the IWW was using the workers to advance our political cause and the company was helping the workers' cause.

Sisters' Camelot and their supporters have also painted the IWW as a third party with an agenda separate from the workers. When the strike first started, members of the community publicly attacked the IWW for "going after" Sisters' Camelot, saying we were racist and that we are against poor people. Notice they didn't say this about the canvassers themselves, just the IWW. This implies two things. First, it implies the IWW has a sinister motive that is separate from the canvassers' struggle to gain control over their work environment. Second, it implies that the IWW is really the one in the driver's seat and not the canvassers. In reality, the canvassers make all their own decisions. They don't need to have their decisions or strategies approved by any other IWW body. While individual Wobblies offer advice and input, the canvassers themselves call all the shots. This narrative constructed by the Sisters' Camelot collective and their supporters ignores the agency of the canvassers and implies that a union campaign involves a group of professionals that parachute in and rescue workers instead of a struggle involving those directly affected.

There is a certain individual that is causing problems for all of us. They are hostile, manipulative and disruptive, and they are destroying our relationship with you. They have ulterior motives. We will all be better off without them.

In many union drives, certain individuals and/or social groups will be singled out and scapegoated as the main agitators and instigators to delegitimize the union campaign. This, among other things, takes the focus off the experiences, grievances and demands of the workers.

At Jimmy John's, certain organizers were singled out due to their well-known pasts as IWW organizers in other high profile union campaigns. Additionally, there were attempts to marginalize certain social groups that were seen as the home base of the core organizers of the campaign. Attempts were made by the company to paint the union as young, white male delivery

drivers from the Southside of Minneapolis. When the company decided to clean house and fire a group of core organizers after a very threatening escalation tactic taken by the union surrounding a sick day campaign, the bosses specifically decided to fire only six workers, all of whom were white and male from the same social scene. The core organizers who were women or people of color were only disciplined, but not fired. As a result, the company was able to frame a narrative of the union being for certain workers and not others. The phrase "drivers' union" became common in the shop among workers who became convinced of the boss's narrative and is still used by many workers who weren't part of the campaign at its height.

At Sisters' Camelot, a very similar anti-union message has been created. Instead of addressing the workers' actual demands, the Sisters' Camelot managing collective shifted the focus to one worker who they accused of theft, being abusive, and manipulating the rest of the canvassers into forming the union. The collective and their supporters have continually made the entire struggle about this one worker and not about the concerns of all of the workers. This is done to distract people from the real issues at stake—the experiences, grievances, and demands of the workers.

The Dirty Truth: Bosses Will Lie.

A final characteristic of anti-union campaigns is a barrage of lies and half-truths coming from management. At Jimmy John's, our committee spent an enormous amount of energy refuting the spin management put on the organizing campaign. The aftermath of the Jimmy John's union recognition election is an excellent example. After we narrowly lost our union election, but ULPs against the company nullified its results, the company put out a statement addressing the election and subsequent National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) settlement resulting from the ULPs. In the statement, they claimed the NLRB only found merit with one-third of all the ULPs we filed. In reality, they only investigated one-third of the ULPs and found merit with all but two of them (out of more than 20). The NLRB found these ULPs to be sufficient to rule the election null and void. If the company had decided to go to court instead of taking a settlement, the NLRB would have investigated the rest of the ULPs. The statement also claimed that we admitted in the settlement that the company committed no wrongdoing. In reality, the settlement contained a clause stating the company is not admitting to violating Section 7 of the National Labor Relations Act (which protects concerted activity of workers), which both parties agreed to. The NLRB explained to us this was a standard clause in all settlements involving first-time offenders of Section 7.

The Sisters' Camelot collective published an FAQ and a letter making several claims that are manipulative and spun to hide the truth. For instance, they claimed that their collective is open, and anyone



Graphic: iww.org

who meets the requirements can join. What they conveniently omitted was the fact that any collective member can block any potential applicant from joining for any reason. The collective has also claimed that none of the collective members are paid. In reality, the position of collective member is a non-paid volunteer position, but all the current collective members also hold paid positions within the organization which only collective members can hold. In another statement, the collective claimed that the canvassers' union went on strike about an hour after giving their demands. This statement failed to mention that the collective flat-out refused to negotiate with the union, which caused the strike to happen. Similarly, at the NLRB trial to reinstate the fired canvasser, a collective member testified that the canvassers wanted a few of their demands met the first day of negotiations. She also claimed the canvassers said they were going to go on strike at the beginning of negotiations. The reality is quite different. The canvassers asked the collective to pick one or two demands that they could begin negotiations on that day. The canvassers didn't say they wanted the collective to agree to those demands that day. Furthermore, the canvassers stated at the beginning of the negotiations they were willing to go on strike if the collective refused to negotiate in good faith. These are but a few examples of the many lies and half-truths the collective has spun to manipulate the truth. In doing so, they behaved as any other boss: with dishonesty and manipulation.

This strike, which continues to drag on, has revealed many things about the nature of the Sisters' Camelot organization, its bosses, and those so-called "radicals" in the community who support the status quo at Sisters'. Those who have defended the collective have done so largely in blind defense of the collective model. And in doing so, they have caused the organization to nearly be destroyed.

No matter how much Sisters' Camelot claims to be anti-authoritarian, their actions speak more truth than the identities they subscribe to. In doing so, they have proven they are no better than the bosses at Jimmy John's.

SPONSOR AN INDUSTRIAL WORKER SUBSCRIPTION FOR A PRISONER

Sponsor an *Industrial Worker* subscription for a prisoner! The IWW often has fellow workers & allies in prison who write to us requesting a subscription to the *Industrial Worker*, the official newspaper of the IWW. This is your chance to show solidarity!

For only \$18 you can buy one full year's worth of working-class news from around the world for a fellow worker in prison. Just visit: <http://store.iww.org/industrial-worker-sub-prisoner.html> to order the subscription TODAY!



Recomposition

★ ★ ★
**An unofficial publication
 by and for wobblies.
<http://recomposition.info>**

Wobbly Arts

This (Mobile Rail) Train Is Bound For Glory

By Sean Carleton, X364847
This song is dedicated to the members of the IWW Mobile Rail Workers Union fighting for better working conditions, unionization and justice in Chicago. Love and solidarity, fellow workers!
Tune: “This Train is Bound for Glory,” traditional.

G
This train is bound for glory, this train.
G D
This train is bound for glory, this train.
G
This train is bound for glory,
C
Now listen up to this union story.
G D G
Thisl train is bound for glory, this train.

This train don’t run without workers, this train;
This train don’t run without workers, this train;
This train don’t run without the workers,
Try telling that to the bossy burglars,
This train don’t run without workers, this train.

This train is owned by liars, this train;
This train owned by liars, this train;
This train is owned by liars,
Mobile Rail just wants their profits higher
This train is owned by liars, this train.

This train don’t carry no scabs, this train;
This train don’t carry no scabs, this train;
This train don’t carry no scabs,
Don’t want to lose like a bucket full of crabs
This train don’t carry no scabs, this train.

This train is leaving in the morning, this train.
This train is leaving in the morning, this train.
This train is leaving in the morning
Our union’s winning, a new day’s dawning!
This train is leaving in the morning, this train.

This train is bound for glory, this train.
This train is bound for glory, this train.
This train is bound for glory,
So fight with the wobblies and be jolly.
This train is bound for glory, this train.

Photo: IWW Mobile Rail Workers Union

The Woman’s Ecosystem

By Nicki Meier
There’s an ecosystem in my mind.
It’s evolving.
I’ve recently cleared away all the decrepit cobwebs.
It smells faintly of my grandmother’s attic.
A box of old books, some fake pearl jewelry and her old wedding dress,
Withered away and stained from years of exposure and moths.

It smells of a distant and hazy childhood.
Perhaps a lot of which is just my imagination.
But it’s comforting, nonetheless.

This childhood was certainly nothing grand.
But it was mine.
You see, even now, women rarely have much that’s their own.
But we do have memories.
Even if they’re mostly illusions.

You see, I have very few clear memories from my childhood.
I mostly craft my own stories from still images, from photographs.
I imagine these stories I’ve dreamed up are probably much more exciting than my real life

Of course, that’s not very difficult.
You see, poor folks don’t usually get to have lives worth telling, goals, or even dreams.
Not even the kind you craft between long shifts on the commute home,
We’re too exhausted for that.

But, you see, I’m always dreaming,
Even while I’m awake.
My pa’ used to say I was in a daze.
Always off in my own little world.
That world in my mind-- my own little ecosystem.

I’d abandoned all hope of a complex system up there,
Until recently.
I think it was the passing of my pa’ that really stirred things up.
Now I’m more determined than ever.

I’ve got big plans for this system,
My own ecosystem, however small.
Like I said before, it’s mine, and women, especially poor women,
We almost never have things of our own.

Someday, if you’re lucky,
You’ll be around to take a peek into my little ecosystem.
By then it won’t be so little anymore.
I’m growing big things.
Just you wait and see.

Graphic: psychotherapist.org

New York Sales Tax Laws

<p>I HAD TO BUY THIS TEXT BOOK FOR SCHOOL \$39.99 PLUS SALES TAX \$43.55</p>	<p>I JUST BOUGHT \$250,000 WORTH OF STOCKS. NO SALES TAX!</p>
<p>I HAD TO RENT A CAR. THEY HAD TO ADD ON 19.875% SALES TAX</p>	<p>I JUST BOUGHT A RACE HORSE! NO SALES TAX!</p>
<p>I JUST BOUGHT A TOY BOAT FOR MY BROTHER 8.875% SALES TAX</p>	<p>I BOUGHT A YACHT! NO SALES TAX!</p>

SALES TAX DURING A CLASS WAR

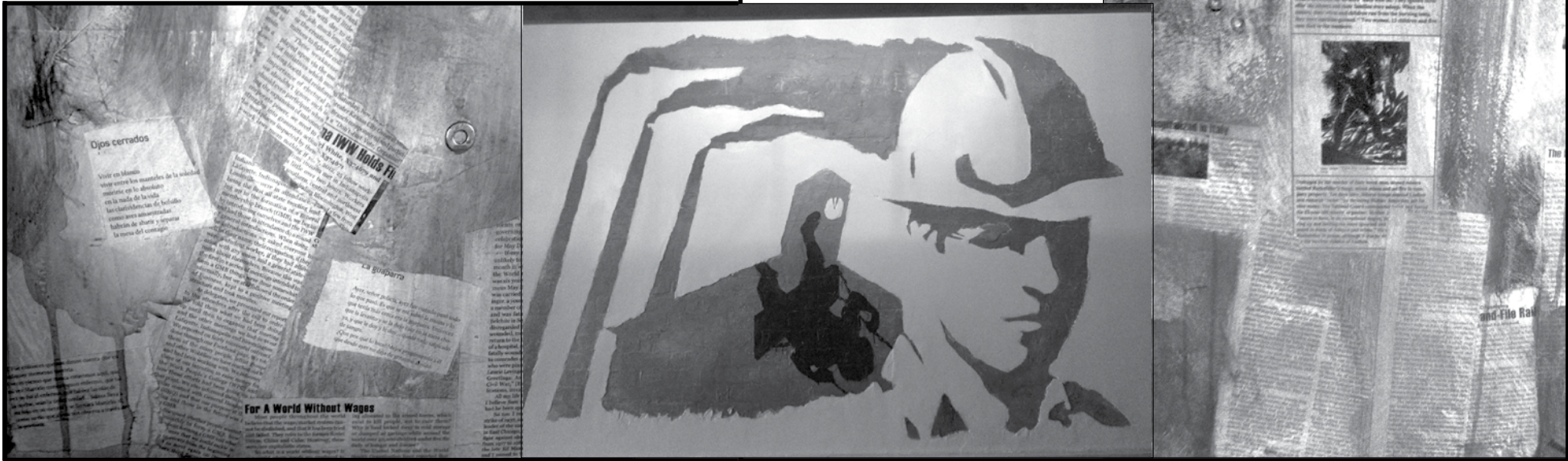
Graphic: Tom Keough

(Untitled)

By Shane Everbeck

...after a long pause,
he told me it was a ticket to hope,
the small crumpled sheet with arcane glyphs
being the object of my inquiry,
an all too precious commodity hope,
we graze on warmed flesh,
like the body of christ on Sunday,
our daily sacrament,
escaping into reality-tv
from the grim state of reality
for my father, consumed body and soul
nine to five,
to feed the unending appetite
of the chief deity
in America’s pantheon
Mammon, god of ambition,
the prince of hope,
his sigil stamped on that crumpled paper
and the heart of mankind
stuffed in a pack of Camel 99’s

Graphic: radicalgraphics.org



Photos: Matteo Zito

Special

A Day In The Life Of An IWW General Headquarters Staffer



Curly fries, a staple food at GHQ (left); FWs visiting headquarters, and busy at work (center); the storefront at 2036 W. Montrose Ave. (right). Photos: Diane Krauthamer

By Matt Muchowski

Hi, my name is Matt Muchowski and I’ve been a staff member at IWW’s General Headquarters (GHQ) here in Chicago for the last year and a half. I’ve been a member of the IWW since 2003 when I got a red card at a Labor Day rally in Pittsburgh.

Working here has been hard but fun. I wanted to write a little bit about what it’s like here to help provide a clearer picture of what we do so that members and anyone thinking of running for General Secretary-Treasurer (GST) in the future, or anyone who wants to stop by now and volunteer, will understand what happens at GHQ.

We often talk to potential members who think the IWW is bigger than we are or smaller than we are. I remember one person in Texas called us the “Navy Seals of the labor movement.” The reality is that for a union with members spread out across the United States and the world, we are small, but growing. One of our biggest tasks at GHQ is working on ways to engage members (especially at-large members, or those who aren’t connected with a branch, shop, or local industrial union) and to be prepared to handle future growth.

GHQ’s basic duties involve maintaining and keeping a record of the union’s finances and member list. Day-to-day, that means we process delegate reports, deposit dues money into the union’s bank account, write checks for the various bills the union has (rent, postage, printing and travel costs), receive mail and answer the phone. GST Sam Green handles almost all of the financial side of things while I do a lot of the member list side of things, a job that Sam did before he was elected as GST. The member list entails tracking members’ dues payments and their contact information. So when we receive a piece of mail returned because the address was incorrect, I am the person who calls and emails members to get their correct address.

I also spend some time everyday updating the GHQ Facebook page, communicating with members from different branches about different questions or concerns they have, and mailing supplies to delegates. In the last two years we have started a summer internship program. We make the program very educational for students and have helped some receive

school credit and outside funding. Some days we have volunteers who help out with different tasks around the office such as stamping our return address on envelopes, data entry and packing Literature Department orders. People who volunteer even just a few hours at GHQ save us a lot of time and help us respond quicker to the time-sensitive duties that we have.

The IWW does more than any other union in the United States, and probably the world, to keep members informed of how their dues are being used by creating a new issue of the General Organizational Bulletin (GOB) every month. The GOB details the union’s finances and member statistics; GHQ is responsible for compiling it and distributing it every month.

Currently, GHQ shares a space at 2036 W. Montrose Ave. in Chicago with the Literature Department, whose job is to help spread pro-IWW knowledge and act as a fundraising arm for the union. Our storefront looks like a book store, while the back has desks where we handle the work of GHQ and a conference room which I jokingly refer to as the “Joe Hill Memorial Conference Room” because we keep Joe Hill’s urn there with several other historical items. Despite holding onto several items of historical note, including several filing cabinets filled with old copies of the *Industrial Worker* and the GOB, most of our historical artifacts are at the IWW archive at Wayne State University’s Walter P. Reuther Library in Detroit. While we are happy to talk to the occasional students and labor history buffs that stop by the office, it’s not really our primary duty, as our office is not a library or history center but an active union office.

We are often asked about the scope of our responsibilities, with questions like: Is GHQ the national office for the IWW? The international? GHQ is ultimately the international office for the IWW, however much of what we do in the United States—processing dues, recording members’ status—is handled internationally by Regional Organizing Committees (ROCs), who then send us reports. ROCs play an especially important role in helping to organize internationally, as they are more familiar with the on-the-ground situation. Sometimes GHQ is asked to pass a

resolution on an important or timely issue. However, we don’t set policy. We simply work for the union and its members. The General Executive Board (GEB) consists of elected volunteers of the union, and they set the budget, pass resolutions, and do a lot of other work to provide oversight to GHQ and the various committees throughout the union such as the International Solidarity Commission, the Organizing Department, and others.

Sometimes GHQ receives calls from people suggesting ideas for the union’s newspaper, the *Industrial Worker*. While the Literature Department handles the finances and part of the administrative work for the newspaper, the editor, Diane, is not based out of GHQ.

While GHQ is engaged in organizing workers into the union, we mainly focus on keeping the administrative side of the union functional and responsive to members. Most of the time when someone calls us and is interested in organizing at their workplace, we try to put them in touch with the organizing committee of their nearest branch, or lacking that, the Organizing Department itself.

In addition to entering delegate reports into our database, I am responsible for providing dues stamps to the several hundred at-large members of the union who pay their dues to GHQ either through the mail or the union’s website.

Regarding at-large members, we are always trying to put them in touch with other Wobblies in their area. We notify all new at-large members about nearby branches and give them a phone and email address of a Wobbly who has agreed to be a new member contact. Among some of the projects we have taken up since GHQ moved to Chicago a few years ago was a plan to call prospective new members who fill out the member application online. We like to touch base with them, answer any questions they have, and try to put them in touch with Wobblies who live near them.

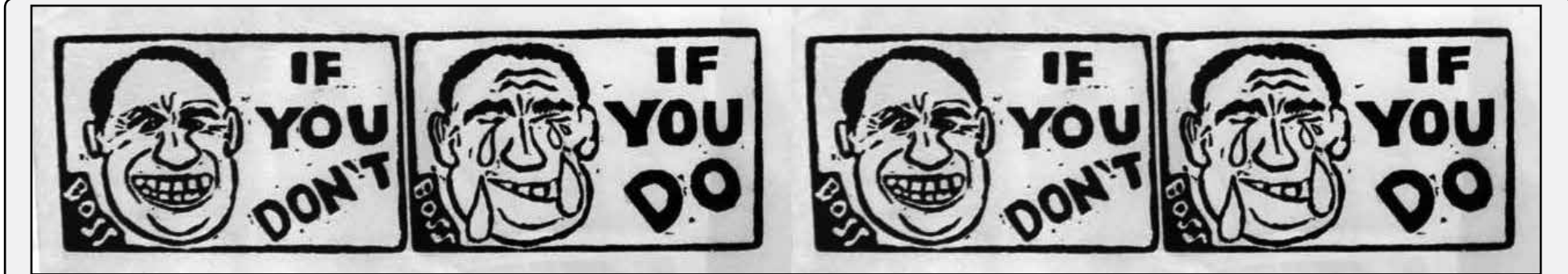
Seeing as how we are the only union that I know of that allows new members to join through our website, we often have people sign up in pretty remote areas. We do not currently have branches in places like Mississippi and Arkansas, yet we have several new members every month

in those states. It’s only a matter of time before we have enough critical mass to develop a branch in areas like that. When someone joins in an area without a branch, we like to talk to them to gauge their interest in building a branch. If they are willing and able, we can connect with other members past and present in their area. Many times members join and drop out after a few months simply because there aren’t other IWW members for them to get together and organize with, but if a Wobbly in the area is willing to do the grunt work to make something happen, those former members are usually more than willing to get involved and pay dues again. This is how the Indiana and Alaska branches became so active recently.

The rate of members who drop out is one of our union’s biggest challenges and is something that we hope the union’s new database will help solve. Currently the union does most of our reports on paper, re-copying information and mailing the paper documents from delegate, to branch secretary, to GHQ. At GHQ we have to enter the information twice, once on our accounting software, and then I enter it on our member database to keep track of members’ dues. The union as a whole is duplicating our effort and using time on data entry that could be better spent on organizing. GHQ often gets calls from members or delegates checking the status of a report because these reports can sometimes take a month to be compiled, mailed, and processed at GHQ. It can be especially frustrating when GHQ receives six months of old delegate reports from a single branch at once.

Hopefully when our new database is set up delegates and members will be able to update their information once and GHQ can spend more time doing follow-up and analysis. We’ll be able to focus on helping delegates and branches with issues they might have, engaging members who have fallen behind on dues on what is going on, and better connecting members to each other so we can organize and build a strong working-class movement.

If you have any questions about GHQ or the union’s administration, don’t hesitate to shoot us an email at ghq@iww.org or call us at 773-728-0996.



“Strike” agit prop, artist unknown. Graphic: Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University

World Labor Solidarity

A COLUMN BY THE
INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY COMMISSION

The IWW formed the International Solidarity Commission to help the union build the worker-to-worker solidarity that can lead to effective action against the bosses of the world. To contact the ISC, email solidarity@iww.org.

Wobbly Solidarity With Garment Workers In Bangladesh

Upstate NY Wobs Picket Baseball Hall Of Fame

By Greg Giorgio

The Upstate New York General Membership Branch (GMB) of the IWW returned to the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum in Cooperstown, N.Y., to conduct informational picketing in mid-August to show solidarity with the garment workers of Bangladesh. This demonstration was largely a reaction to two factory death-trap tragedies in Bangladesh, at Tazreen and Rana Plaza, which killed some 1,300 wage slaves in the sweatshop designed “free trade” zone where several million earn paltry sums as the lowest paid garment workers in the world.

FW Paul Poulos told several onlookers that “these workers were murdered” while handing out the picket’s flier, titled “The Black Cat Moan.” The Tazreen fire killed about 130 workers when fire exits were locked and extinguishers were largely unavailable. Rana Plaza claimed 1,127 when the building, a flimsy and illegal construction which had begun to give way days earlier, collapsed on mostly young women. These and other factory deaths in Bangladesh in recent years have prompted Wobblies and other activists to call for renewed efforts to pressure the Gap, Walmart, Benetton, American

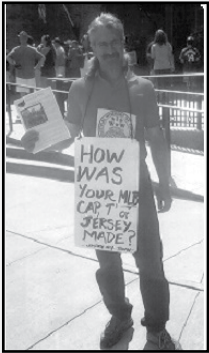


Photo: Paul Poulos
FW Greg Giorgio protests.

Eagle and other retailers to comply with implied and legislated standards to create both safer working conditions and basic rights like collective bargaining. When the Upstate New York GMB set up their literature table and began to spread information amongst the baseball fans in Cooperstown, a Hall of Fame official, who never identified himself, attempted to discourage the action. “Do you have a permit?” he asked. This was a pretext for his suggestion to move across the street once the Wobblies assured him they had no intention to move along. The threat of police enforcement was an empty one. Wobblies spent an hour talking to fans about how Major League Baseball is a big profiteer in sweatshop produced team logo gear, some fashioned in Bangladesh. The Upstate New York GMB also has been working with other Wobs to coordinate actions and conduct fundraising in solidarity with the National Garment Workers Federation of Bangladesh in the wake of these recent factory deaths. Stay in touch with these efforts, join an upcoming conference call, and donate. Please contact FW Greg Giorgio at 518-861-5627 or ggwob56@yahoo.com. Donations can be sent to: Upstate N.Y. IWW, P.O. Box 235 Albany, NY 12201-0235.

Pittsburgh, Boston Wobs Show Solidarity

By Kenneth Miller

On June 8, members of the the Pittsburgh IWW held a nice action in a little upscale fashion district called Shadyside. There were no media and no cops, just a bunch of Wobblies and other anti-sweatshop activists protesting in front of Benetton. We talked to customers and retail workers about sweatshops and we had copies of the “Accord on Factory and Building Safety in Bangladesh,” which was passed on May 13, to discuss. We tried to envision how we would process a grievance at Benetton in Shadyside with the National Garment Workers Federation (NGWF) of Bangladesh.

Our signs said “Fight Like Hell for the Living” and “Let’s Talk about Benetton Sweatshops.” Mike Stout brought enlarged photos of the collapsed factory in Dhaka.

We had a nice flier to hand out with a terrific IWW graphic, “Workers With the Needle” by Andy P. and text by Mathieu Dube and Jacob Brent. Robin Clark brought an updated flier about the Gap and Walmart not being signatories to the safety accord, and distributed some IWW membership information to workers in Shadyside before our action.



Boston Wobs occupy a Gap & protest in solidarity with Bangladeshi garment workers on June 16.

On June 28, Fight Back Pittsburgh organized an action at the Gap in Shadyside. Folks from the United Steelworkers (USW) and Service Employees International Union (SEIU) participated. Patrick Young, president of the USW’s staff union, did a great deal to help organize this event. After the Gap, they marched past Benetton over to Banana Republic, another retail/fashion label owned by the Gap.

We are doing as much as we can with the fundraising graphic from FW Tom Keough, which is a terrific IWW silent agitator (see below). We are really pleased that Greg Giorgio and Paul Poulos in upstate New York are bottom-lining this fundraising effort. The Pittsburgh IWW is looking to do more actions in the future.



This ad was not paid for with any money collected for the NGWF. This was paid for by individual IWW members.

Graphic: Tom Keough

Mid Yorkshire Health Workers Strike

From Libcom.org

Bosses at the Mid Yorkshire Hospitals National Health Service (NHS) Trust, which provides health care services to the surrounding areas including Dewsbury and Wakefield, thought they could begin an onslaught on the wages and conditions of staff with an attack on what they perceived to be the weakest workers, namely administrative staff. They attempted in part to recoup £21.8 million of cuts over 2012-2013 by downgrading administrative workers, which meant that some staff were facing wage cuts of £2,800 per year.

Management poorly miscalculated when they thought that administrative staff would accept these cuts, which would pave the way for attacks on other workers. After a successful ballot for industrial action, the 2,500 UNISON members took strike action nine times for 24-hour periods and waged a staunch press campaign, hitting the headlines of local television and building up public support with well-attended picket lines. The strike action prevented management from imposing wage cuts and forced them to negotiate through the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS), where management was forced into a deal that will



Picket lines in West Yorkshire.

Photo: libcom.org

protect the staff’s salary for a three-year period.

In many ways this puts the battle off to a future date, but to millions of workers who are burdened by attacks from the government, it shows that resolute strike action can get results.

Now, members are bracing themselves for a fight against management’s proposals for a “new partnership agreement,” which the Royal College of Nursing disgracefully backed and which could result in the UNISON branch secretary and Socialist Party member Adrian O’Malley being made redundant when his post is deleted.

If we are truly to defend workers, we need more rank-and-file organization of workers in different unions, bypassing the bureaucracy of the unions to ferment independent and collective action to defend all workers and not just sectional interests.

Bahrain Guest Workers Strike

By John Kalwaic

Following the mysterious suicide of Deu Ram Rai, 22, around 500 Nepali temporary guest workers from Nepal, Pakistan, India, and Bangladesh went on indefinite strike for increased wages and better living conditions in the Persian Gulf kingdom of Bahrain on Aug. 24. The strikers, who had only been in Bahrain for 20 months, believe that Deu Ram Rai hung himself because the company was denying his sick days despite him being very ill.

Although their fellow worker’s suicide was the catalyst for the strike, the workers have a set of demands that includes sick time and better living conditions. Currently, the workers do not get sick time even with a doctor’s note and are cramped together with eight to nine people in a labor camp room designed for four. They

also demand more vacation time and a canteen inside their Sitra accommodation.

The company claimed that it was only the Nepali workers who went on strike and that they had threatened the other workers from Pakistan, India, and Bangladesh to prevent them from going to work. The company also claimed that the strikers are being unreasonable and gave them a time frame for stopping the strike or having their contracts terminated. The majority of the residents of Bahrain are foreign guest workers who work as cheap laborers. Unlike other gulf countries, workers can join unions and strike in Bahrain; however, the workers who are allowed to join a union and strike tend to be native Bahrainis, not foreign guest workers.

With files from Gulf Daily News. Jonathan D. Beasley contributed to this piece.

Poland: Protests But No Strike



Mass protests in Warsaw on Sept. 14.

Photo: libcom.org

From Libcom.org

At least 100,000 people joined the demonstrations called by the three main trade unions in Poland against the legislation that basically did away with the guaranteed eight-hour work day in Poland (see “Poland Eliminates The Eight-Hour Day,” September *IW*, page 12). Despite the serious attacks against the working class, the unions backed off from calling strikes after the government threatened to do away with the system that gives them subsidized, paid union jobs.

It is obvious that this system is used to manage a class of labor bureaucrats who have become used to the understanding between them and the bosses: don’t make trouble and we will finance your cadres of unionists.

At the rank-and-file level, there are people ready to strike. But they are also

constrained by the unions which follow the restrictive laws on strikes and take all measures possible to moderate any potential action from the workers. Some years ago, there were more workers who were ready to break union discipline, but now many seem quite demoralized. Despite the large number of demonstrators, the protests were much calmer than the ones which took place in the country five

to ten years ago.

The unions also did little to spread the protest to other unions and social groups, instead choosing to deliberately exclude some, such as the fourth largest union in Poland. The mobilization from the right wing was quite large, whereas the left and alternative mobilizations were very weak, highlighting the unfortunate social situation in the country at present. Nazis and fascists took part in the event, going after various comrades.

Despite the large protest, it looks like the Polish working class is still far from taking more resolute action against the attacks against it, exposing it to even further abuse and ensuring its position as a source of cheap labor for capitalists who are looking to dump jobs there. We can only hope some things will happen to turn the situation around in the near future.